

Museum Victoria field guides

Museum Victoria's series of field guides to the marine life of Victoria is so *a propos* of the theme of this issue of *The Victorian Naturalist* that it should not fail to be mentioned here. What follows is less a review of the books making up the series than an overview of the series itself, a series of booknotes relating to the constituent parts. The Editors thank the publisher of this series, Museum Victoria, in particular the Managing Publisher Patty Brown, as well as Dr Mark Norman, Head of Science at Museum Victoria, both of whom willingly and readily provided material for the purpose of making readers aware of this series.

Drawing on the wide expertise of the institution's staff—curators and collection managers—as well as Museum Victoria's vast collections, the series provides both an introduction to the subject and a source of further detailed information about the range of marine fauna to be found around our coast, and in adjacent waters. To date four volumes have been published, and four more are scheduled for release in the coming months.

These field guides are aimed at naturalists, beachcombers and environmental scientists; the intent is to enable observers in these groups to identify the marine animals most commonly found along the shore or in shallow waters along the Victorian coast. The series aims to cover the common animals, each book dealing with a different group.

Titles in the series published so far include:

- *An introduction to marine life* by Robin Wilson, Mark Norman and Anna Syme;
- *Crabs, hermit crabs and allies* by Gary CB Poore;
- *Barnacles* by Gary CB Poore;

The forthcoming titles are:

- *Shrimps, prawns and lobsters* by Gary CB Poore (available in early 2011);
- *Sponges* by Lisa Goudie, Mark Norman and Julian Finn;
- *Bivalves* by Sue Boyd and Mark Norman;
- *Nudibranchs* by Robert Burns;
- *Sea Spiders* by David Staples;
- *Seastars and relatives* by Mark O'Loughlin and Tim O'Hara;
- *Feather Corals* by Jan Watson;
- *Lace corals* by Phil Bock.

In each of the guides, descriptions of the species are accompanied with full colour illustrations and detailed drawings, for easy recognition. Also included are maps, comprehensive reference information, scientific and common name indexes and a glossary.

Museum Victoria is to be commended for this magnificent series of books on a part of the natural world that is a source of fascination, but at the same time a source of mystery, to many people.



Clarrie's Hermit Crab *Pagurixus handrecki*. Photo reproduced from page 49 of *Crabs, hermit crabs and allies*, with permission of the publisher.